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# **SHOULD SOCIALISTS SUPPORT FEDERAL UNION?**

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**Report of a Debate**

*between*

**FEDERAL UNION**

(MRS. BARBARA WOOTTON)

*and*

**SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN**

(E. HARDY)

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**PRICE**

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The  
**SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN**

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**OBJECT**

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

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**DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.**  
THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

**HOLDS—**

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.
7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

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# Should Socialists Support Federal Union ?

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## REPORT of a DEBATE

between

FEDERAL UNION

(Mrs. BARBARA WOOTTON)

and

SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

(Mr. E. HARDY)

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Chairman - - - Mr. R. G. W. MACKAY

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Debate held at  
CONWAY HALL, LONDON,  
May 6th, 1940

# SHOULD SOCIALISTS SUPPORT FEDERAL UNION?

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THE CHAIRMAN, in opening the proceedings, said the debate had been arranged jointly by the organisation known as Federal Union and by the Socialist Party of Great Britain. Mrs. Barbara Wootton would answer the question, "Should Socialists support Federal Union?" in the affirmative, and Mr. Hardy would answer it in the negative. Mrs. Wootton would first speak for thirty minutes and then Mr. Hardy would speak for thirty minutes, after which they would speak in the same order for twenty minutes and then for ten minutes. There would be no speeches or questions from members of the audience.

Mrs. Barbara Wootton was well known as a Socialist thinker and writer, and Mr. Hardy was also well known, as a nondescript member (as he preferred to be called) of the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

The subject of the debate was an exceedingly important one, and the question of what was to be done at the end of the war in order to organise a better world was no doubt a question that was very much in the mind of everyone present that evening.

MRS. BARBARA WOOTTON: There is one thing about which I hope Mr. Hardy and I are going to agree, because if we do it will probably save us a little time and prevent those who are present here this evening from feeling that they have been cheated out of the money that they give to the collection! I hope Mr. Hardy and I are going to agree to some extent about what a Socialist is. I am not sure that we are going to agree all the way, but I

think we are going to agree far enough to enable us to go along some sort of common track in this discussion as to whether a Socialist should also be a supporter of Federal Union. I am going to make four statements about a Socialist, hoping that Mr. Hardy will endorse all of them, even if he wants to add a few others of his own.

First, a Socialist is a person who thinks that the economic resources of the world should be used to provide a good living for the population of the world. A Socialist is primarily a person who believes in the organisation of economic life for the satisfaction of human needs. That proposition alone is not quite enough, because almost everybody, Socialist and non-Socialist alike, I suppose, would agree that that is what ought to be done. The non-Socialist or capitalist would, or could, say that that is what capitalism does, and the Socialist would say that that is what Socialism would do. Therefore, I am going to add to that proposition three other propositions.

My second proposition is that a Socialist is a person who puts equality, particularly social and economic and political equality, very high in his scale of social values. A Socialist is a person who not only thinks that ordinary people ought to have enough, but also thinks that other people, also ordinary, ought not to have too much, and who believes that equality is of value in itself.

Thirdly, a Socialist is a person who believes that it is very unlikely that we shall get equality and very unlikely that we shall get the use of the world's economic resources for the needs of the common man, unless there is collective ownership and collective operation of those resources. A Socialist, therefore, is a Collectivist, a person who believes in some form or other of common ownership, and believes in it because he thinks that common ownership is a necessary condition for equality.

My fourth proposition—and in this I want to go as far as I possibly can to meet Mr. Hardy—is that most Socialists are people who think that in the world in which we live, the English world, this kind of equality, this use of resources for the common man, is prevented by something that we

would call a class system, by which I think we would both mean a system under which a minority of people, not because of merit or superior intelligence or even superior training, but because of their possession of economic power, exercise far more than their due share of influence on the political, social and economic policies of the community. I think that we would agree that we could produce tangible evidence of the existence of some such class system. I am not sure that we would define it in exactly the same way—I rather think we would not—but I think we would agree that a Socialist is a person who conceives that class system as something which stands between him and the objectives of equality and the use of the world's resources for the common need, which I defined as the Socialist's objectives.

Now, if that is the kind of person that a Socialist is, and if that is the kind of thing that a Socialist wants, I think one other proposition has to be added, that is, that any kind of Socialist who is going to hold up his head in public does not want equality or prosperity for the people of one nation alone. In Socialism there is a strong and an honourable tradition of internationalism. I am going to suggest to you in a moment that there are a great many Socialists, people who would be Socialists according to my four propositions, and people who would call themselves Socialists, who are very poor internationalists at the present time; but I am also going to suggest to you that every Socialist who has sold his internationalism, as most of them have, is, at the bottom of his heart, very uncomfortable and very much ashamed. The Socialist does not want equality and prosperity for the people of one State alone, but he wants them for the widest possible community over the whole area of this planet. I do not know that it is altogether accidental that it was in the year 1866 that the first International, the first international working men's Association, held its first conference, and that it was *after* and not before that date that the word "internationalism" first appeared in print in the English language. The Socialist movement has had a tremendous influence, and a very honourable influence, in creating the tradition that we know as the international tradition. All Socialists are ashamed of themselves when

they are not internationalists, and all Socialists as we recognise them will blush to the roots of their hair if they lay themselves open to the charge of being called National Socialists.

Socialism is an international doctrine by tradition, and what is the situation that we see in the world to-day? There are Socialist parties which have retained their internationalism. Mr. Hardy's party is one of them. What is its membership? It may be he will tell you. What has happened to the big Socialist parties? What has happened to the big Socialist Internationals? The large Socialist parties, the great majority of people who call themselves Socialists, have abandoned their internationalism. They were exhorted to unite across the whole world. They still pay lip service to the idea that it is the business of the workers of the world to unite, and they do unite; they unite behind the Maginot Line and behind the Siegfried Line, and that has now become the conception of unity of the workers of the world, not for the first time within the memory of many who are present in this hall this evening. Only the smallest minority of the Socialist parties have retained the international tradition. The international tradition has been largely lost, and I am going to ask Socialists to give their support to Federal Union as one way of bringing back into the Socialist movement the international tradition, the loss of which I think every one of us bitterly mourns, and as one way of solving the appalling problem that faces us at the present time, when we have before us two alternatives: either we give way to tyranny, to a movement which suppresses everything for which Socialists have stood, or the workers of the world unite in mutual destruction.

Now, why has the international tradition been lost? It has been lost, first, because of the fear of war and then because of the fact of war, and one cannot discuss Federal Union without saying something about the causes, first of the fear of war and then of the fact of war.

I think that, when there are a great many things that people can fight about (and there are), the first cause of war

is the absence of any kind of international machinery for preventing and restraining it, of any effective international order. There are, after all, more things than the mind can imagine, economic and non-economic, which lead to disputes, both in the national and in the international field. Mr. Hardy and I are prevented from settling our dispute by the most primitive of methods by the fact that if we were to get together and fight it out we should be stopped by the police. In the international field there is no such means of prevention, and, in the absence of any kind of effective international order, all the causes that make for war, some of which are economic and some of which, I think, are not economic, do, in fact, result in war. Federal Union offers a simple, a workable and, I think, an effective means of settling the kind of dispute that leads to international war within the area of the Federation.

That is one reason for the existence of war—the fact that there is nothing to prevent it. Then there is a second reason. I know that amongst many Socialists it is fashionable to decry as a cause of war anything that has not a strictly economic origin, but I think it is very difficult to interpret the history of our own time exclusively in economic terms. Recall for a moment the history of this century since 1914. In the third week of August, 1914, the second Socialist International was going to hold a conference to decide on the measures which the workers of the world should take to prevent international war. That conference was never held, and the reason why it was never held was that national sentiment swayed the workers of the world far more powerfully than their belief in the unity of the workers. Their allegiance to their own flag, their belief in the necessity of fighting German militarism, their belief in the necessity of finding a place in the sun, prevailed against their belief in their unity as common decent people. That happened in 1914, and, as you very well know, it happened again in 1939. For militarism in 1939 we substitute Nazism and, having acquired a little education in the interval, for a place in the sun we substituted the word *lebensraum*, showing that we now know German. All this has happened because national sentiment has been too strong.

Federal Union is simply a political device for obliterating national sentiment, and at the same time providing machinery for dealing with aggressive persons. It obliterates national sentiment because the people within the area of the Federation are not citizens of Great Britain or citizens of France or citizens of Germany, but become citizens of a wider community. The final objective of Federal Union is that that area should be as wide as the confines of this planet. I do not think many people believe that that would happen immediately, but we do believe that, if we could combine in one Federation and common citizenship the peoples of Germany, of France and of England, we might prevent one major war, and if we prevented one major war we might save the lives of several millions of the workers whom it is the business of the Socialist movement to unite.

The first thing that Federal Union offers, then, is a quite limited, but still important means of establishing international order and of combating national sentiment; and the second thing that it offers is a means of dealing with aggression which does not place people in the awful dilemma that faces every sincere person at the present time. Every sincere person in the country at the present time is faced with this: either he must say, "Nazism shall have its way," or he must say, "I will go out and destroy those whom I know to be my comrades."

Within a Federation force is brought to bear not against whole groups—the State of Germany or the State of France—but force is brought to bear, when force is used at all, against aggressive persons. Within a Federation responsibility is individual. The member of a Local Council, the member of a State Legislature, the Governor of a State, who breaks the Federal Constitution is personally responsible and personally liable to be brought before the Courts; but within a Federation the whole people of the State are not charged with one man's guilt and are not made to bear the burden which is optimistically known as collective security, but which is really collective destruction.

Once a political union is obtained, all experience shows that the contacts of the Socialist workers of the world are made

easier, their union is made more workable and not more difficult. The minority Socialist parties to-day have retained their internationalism, but they retain it chiefly on paper, and that is not their fault; no blame is due to them for that. They retain it on paper for this reason. They know that they have comrades within the Third Reich and they know they have comrades within the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, but can they get to them? Can they unite with them? Can they get visas? Nobody will be more surprised than the members of this audience when the Secretary of the Socialist Party of Great Britain gets a visa to Cologne to visit his opposite number in the Third Reich or his opposite number in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. Because these are independent States, because they are independent members of the anarchic community of nations, all of them are interested in keeping out traitorous persons like the Secretaries of Socialist movements in other countries.

We have not yet a federation with France, but we have a very loving alliance which is supposed to be a courtship for a federation, and already it is becoming apparent that it is a very great deal easier for the British workers' movement to make contacts when there is close political union, as is the case with France, than it is to make contacts in a State to which we are not bound by these ties of alliance and political amity. After all, if you want to go and consult with your opposite number in Yorkshire you can go, because you live under the same political union, but if you want to go and consult with your opposite number anywhere outside this country, even in France, you have to fill up about a dozen forms before you can get across the Channel. Those things are quite small things, but they are signs of the greater ease with which associations of workers can be formed once there is a common flag and a common political organisation.

I have based my case on the danger which war offers to the Socialist movement, and on the greater ease of association that obtains when there is a common citizenship and a common political organisation, and I am quite sure

that Mr. Hardy will say that that shows a complete misconception of the causes of war. I am therefore going to refer to an argument which I have heard many times from Socialists. They say that what I have argued would be all very well if I was right about the causes of war; but that what we have to do is to get Socialism first, country by country, and then all international problems will solve themselves; that we shall not get rid of the causes of war until we get rid of capitalism here, there and everywhere else; and that the destruction of capitalism, like charity, begins at home. I want to call your attention to one or two points which, I think, suggest that that argument is not really so well founded as it seems to be.

First of all, on the general proposition that capitalism is the cause of war, the record of human history goes back for several thousand years, and it is estimated that during perhaps a few hundred of those several thousand years there has been peace in the world. It therefore looks as if war antedated capitalism by quite a long time.

The second argument is very tragic and very plain to see. What happens when one country establishes Socialism and lets the rest of the world go hang? I think you can see, from the history of the last twenty years, what happens when Socialism is started on a national basis. There was something called Socialism in one country, and then there was something called National Socialism. A great many people thought that they were completely and utterly opposed to one another and had nothing in common, but then they discovered that the two could be very effective allies. A Socialism which looks only to its own country degenerates, being undermined by the strength of the national sentiment, into something which is dangerously near to National Socialism—a combination of words which I suppose all good Socialists abhor.

I am one of those who think (I do not know whether Mr. Hardy will agree with me) that during the inter-war period very real progress was made in this country towards laying the foundations of the Socialist order, and that the only reason why we did not get further was that Socialists

suffered from an obsession that they were not strong enough, although their power was probably greater than we imagined. Then the war came, and all the foundations that had been laid, and all the civil liberties on which our Socialist propaganda rested disappeared in a single week, and we pin our hopes to some dim and distant day when we shall begin again—thirty years further back—after the war is over. Some of you have seen that happen twice, and some of you have begun to wonder whether it is any good trying to get Socialism before you get an international political organisation, if you have to give it all up and start thirty years back every twenty years. If you work out that sum, I wonder where you will be in a hundred years' time! Not quite as far on as you are now, anyhow!

All the evidence shows that political unity does help. I know the academic argument very well—that the cause of war is the competition of capitalists. I could put that argument to you admirably, but I have not time to do so, and I will leave it to Mr. Hardy. But I also know that there are capitalists in Wales and Scotland bitterly competing in recent years with capitalists in the southern part of England, and I could put forward an admirable academic argument to show you why their competition will inevitably lead them into war; and yet they do not go to war. They do all sorts of other very unpleasant things, but they do not go to war, and the reason why they do not go to war, I submit to you, is that they have established a political union. Political unity is of very great help in staving off the war that puts your Socialism back, the war that breaks up your international Socialist movement and that makes impossible and illegal your Socialist propaganda, the war that puts your Socialists into jail.

I will tell you now three things that Federal Union is not. First, Federal Union is not Socialism. A Socialist should support Federal Union because it is a necessary tool for getting Socialism, but he should not be a Federal Unionist and say: "When we get Federal Union everything in the garden will be lovely." It will not. The Socialist has to support Federal Union simply as a piece of machinery, just as when we go to a place by train we

need an engine on the train, but the engine is not the place to which we want to go. That is the position that Federal Union holds in relation to Socialism.

Secondly, Federal Union does not ask you to support any kind of Federation, but only a Federation which will give an opportunity for Socialist propaganda to be carried on, that is to say, a Federation which respects the civil liberties of the individual. I am not here to support, and will never support, a Federal dictatorship.

Thirdly, there is the argument that Socialists should not support Federal Union because the wrong people support it. I must confess that that is a thing about which I have never been at all frightened. I have never been afraid to appear with anybody on what I sincerely believe to be a sound platform. If it is the wrong person and you make it clear to him what the platform is, he will get off it quickly enough. Federation is a neutral instrument which you can use for good things or bad things. The way not to leave it to the wrong people is, I think, quite simple. It is for those who are here to-night to associate themselves with this movement for political Federation, not because it is Socialism, not because it is Utopian, not because Federal States are lovely paradises, but because, unless we have political Federation, we shall have 1914 and 1939 again, a little speeded up to allow for modern technique—shall we say 1953 next time? And still you are going to try to get Socialism first!

(*End of Mrs. Woottton's first Speech.*)

## FIRST SPEECH FOR S.P.G.B.

MR. E. HARDY : As the Chairman has told you, the subject of our debate is, "Should Socialists support Federal Union?" Mrs. Wootton has said that Socialists should support her organisation, which she agrees is not itself a Socialist organisation and which does not pretend to be. I am going to oppose that point of view and to say that Socialists should not support Federal Union, and I do so on behalf of the Socialist Party of Great Britain. I shall say a few words about that, for the benefit of those who are not already familiar with the stand taken by my organisation, but I would say this at the beginning. The question that matters is whether Federal Union can prevent or abolish war, and obviously if it could be shown that, even in a capitalist world, Federal Union could abolish war there would be an overwhelming case for Socialists to give up their concentration on Socialism in order to support Federal Union for the purpose of preventing war. But it is the view of the organisation that I represent that capitalism causes war. Now, if capitalism is the cause of war the position is, of course, very different. If capitalism causes war and capitalism will go on causing war, then whether we have a Federal Union or not we shall have war. That is our case.

At the beginning of her address Mrs. Wootton made four general statements, which she said—and she hoped I would agree—summed up the position for Socialists. In those statements as given there is little or nothing with which one could disagree, although in certain respects the statements are not sufficiently precise to show exactly what conclusions could be drawn from them. I would, however, point out one or two things about them.

My opponent and I can agree that the world as it exists does not satisfy human needs, but that is not the position of other members of Federal Union. Lord Lothian, for example, who is listed as one of the prominent members of Federal Union, not only strongly disagrees with that statement but claims that capitalism is not the cause of poverty and inequality : that sovereignty is the cause of

those things and that capitalism has been a great success. He, naturally, has no intention whatever of doing anything to assist in the abolition of capitalism. My opponent will say, of course, that the members of Federal Union are permitted to have their own views on questions like this, that they come together merely because they agree about Federal Union. I will deal with that aspect of the matter later on.

We are agreed that the economic evils that exist in the world are caused by the class ownership of the means of producing and distributing wealth. We can also agree that Socialists are internationalists. If a man is not an internationalist, then he is not a Socialist. I would add this, that all these things are summed up adequately in the Declaration of Principles of the Socialist Party of Great Britain. I will not waste your time by reading the whole of them to you, you can all make yourselves familiar with them. I would, however, point out one or two things about the Socialist Party of Great Britain. Our object is this : "The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community." One of the clauses in our Declaration of Principles points out that "the emancipation of the working class"—that is, the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of Socialism—"will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex." There we have the perfect definition of the international standpoint of the Socialist Party of Great Britain. The last clause in our Declaration of Principles says that the Socialist Party of Great Britain "calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom."

I may add one word, that as far as the question of equality under Socialism is concerned we cannot sum these things up better than the words used by Marx a century

ago, taken by him from earlier writings on the subject, that the distribution we should aim at should be based on this principle: "From each according to his capacity; to each according to his needs."

I do not think I need say anything more than that about the internationalism of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, but for the benefit of those who are not familiar with that organisation I would point out that it was formed in 1904 out of the experience members had had of other organisations, and they formed a certain definite outlook on the subject of achieving Socialism that has been retained by the organisation ever since. They decided that the only way to get Socialism was to make Socialism their only "ism." The Socialist Party of Great Britain has no other "ism" than that. We hold implicitly that Socialism is the only hope of the workers. Unlike other organisations that use that phrase, we do not at the same time suppose that there are half a dozen other hopes of the workers. The object of all our efforts is Socialism.

I might add that the Socialist Party of Great Britain is, and always has been, democratic. We have always aimed at achieving Socialism by the one way in which it can be done, that is, first, by making Socialists, and then by gaining control of the political machinery of society. But it is, of course, a very important point that we do not believe we can get Socialism by short cuts, by accumulations of reforms, by pacts with other organisations; in short, we shall never get Socialism until we have Socialists. Also, we have never toyed with dictatorship, either Nazi or Communist, and we have never adopted the pernicious view of aiming merely at power. We have never supposed that Socialism was a question of getting rid of one ruling class in order to put another ruling class in its place. We have always aimed at building a better world for the people who live in it, and we have never supposed that Socialism was something that could be forced on the world against the wishes of the inhabitants of the world.

With regard to our definition of Socialism, we would say that there is only one definition of Socialism: we aim at

replacing private ownership of the means of life by common ownership. We aim at production solely for use, which means the abolition of rent, interest and profit. Further, we are, of course, international. Socialism is itself an international conception and there can be no such thing as Socialism in one country and, incidentally, of course, since we claim that capitalism is the cause of war, we believe that Socialism, and Socialism only, will get rid of that conflict of interest, that drive for markets, that striving for areas of raw material and strategic points, and so on, which are the causes of war.

There is one other thing that I must point out, and it is important, because certain of the people who support Federal Union (Dr. Joad, for example, who has written pamphlets for Federal Union and is listed among their prominent supporters) have used the argument which comes up again to-night in a slightly different form, that we shall want Federal Union whether we have Socialism or capitalism. Dr. Joad has said that during the past twenty years, what he calls Socialist countries have existed, and the arguments that can be applied to capitalist countries are applicable also to them. Mrs. Wootton spoke rather similarly this evening about the progress which she claimed had been made towards Socialism in the interval between the last war and the present war. It is implicit in the position of the Socialist Party of Great Britain that Socialism is not State capitalism, that the mere State ownership and control of transport, industries, and so on, is not Socialism; it has nothing to do with Socialism and will not bring us towards Socialism. The only basis for Socialism is the common ownership of the means of production and distribution and the production of goods and the operation of services, not for the purpose of making a profit, but solely for the purpose of meeting the needs of the population of the world. Therefore, in that sense we cannot agree about what Socialism is. I make the statement which the Socialist Party of Great Britain makes, that there are no Socialist countries in existence now and there never have been any Socialist countries at any time in the history of the human race. Once you recognise that fact, you can see the falsity

of the argument put forward, for example, by Dr. Joad, based on the supposed experience of the countries that he had in mind—such countries as Germany under its Social Democratic Government, or this country under a Labour Government, or Russia, which is the other country he mentions. None of those countries is now Socialist or ever has been Socialist.

I only want to say this, that it is implicit in the position of the Socialist Party of Great Britain that Socialism is a system of society based on common ownership, and the mere administration of capitalism by persons calling themselves Labour or Socialist or Communist does not produce a Socialist country and does not even lead towards it, but it is much more likely to lead to a reaction towards Fascism and dictatorship, such as the reaction in Germany, after years of Social Democratic government. I have heard of cases in which directors or owners of brewing concerns have themselves been teetotallers, but the fact that the directors or owners of Barclay, Perkins & Co., or Watney, Combe & Co., may be teetotallers does not mean that their organisations become any the less organisations for the purpose of making a profit and getting people to drink alcohol. I will give you another illustration. The late Mr. Nobel, who originated the Nobel Peace Prize, was himself an opponent of war and a pacifist, but that did not in any way diminish the explosive character of the instruments of war made by Nobel's Explosives, Limited. Similarly, it is an illusion that the mere administration of capitalism by persons who say they do not believe in capitalism in any way, changes the capitalist nature of the social organisation. It does not even change in an important way the day-to-day activities of the capitalist Government. That has a very important bearing on Federal Union, because I am going to show you later that the supporters of Federal Union have a totally wrong conception of the nature of the State. The capitalist State exists for the purpose of preventing the class division of society from disrupting the social organisation, also for the purpose of protecting the interests of the different capitalist groups from the activities of rival capitalist groups abroad, and when people who call themselves Labour

and who do not believe in capitalism take on the job of administering that State machine they are the mere instruments of the machine; they are not in control of it but they are controlled by it.

Mrs. Wootton raised the question that a number of small Socialist organisations have retained their internationalism, but the large organisations have not done so. My answer to that is, of course, that the large organisations never were really international. I have attended certain congresses myself that were alleged to be international congresses, but the national groups of delegates were so nationalistically-minded that I thought it a very good thing they could not speak the same language, or they would have quarrelled a great deal more than they did.

Now I come to a very important point. Mrs. Wootton says that the first cause of war is the lack of international machinery, and that is laid down in quite a number of Federal Union documents. Lord Lothian says it is "sovereignty and not capitalism or Communism which is the fundamental cause of war." I would say that that is in its nature a quite fallacious argument. One cannot explain war by the existence or non-existence of a piece of international machinery. One has to find the motive behind it, the driving force that makes the people who control that machine set it and its armaments in motion. In the industrial field there are people who say that if there were no trade unions there would be no strikes, but it is the drive, the urge behind it, which both creates the machinery and sets it in motion. The class division of society is responsible for trade unions and, of course, for employers' associations, and it is the class division of society and the fact that capitalist society is not a community but consists of classes struggling with one another that brings into existence the sovereign State and arms it. The fact is that the supporters of Federal Union have a view of the State which is fundamentally different from the view held by Socialists. They think of the State as an organisation brought into existence to promote the welfare of a great mass of individuals who happen to live in a particular country; they do not recognise that the State in the modern capitalist world is "the executive com-

mittee of the ruling class," and that it must perform the function of preventing the class division of society from disrupting society, and also the function of maintaining armed forces to protect capitalism from foreign capitalist States. Of course, when I speak of the State I am not thinking of a mere central administrative organisation, such as would be needed in any community and will be needed under Socialism. I am thinking of this coercive State machine, this organisation with armaments, and so on, which exists under capitalism and which I say is quite misunderstood by the supporters of Federal Union. When they claim that sovereignty itself causes war they are reversing the whole position and failing to recognise that it is capitalism which causes the sovereign State, this coercive organisation, to come into being, and it will also cause war.

Mrs. Wootton has touched on the question as to how capitalism helps to cause war. Production in the capitalist world has become international in this sense: capitalism has broken across frontiers and thrust itself into backward countries, destroyed agricultural self-supporting countries and forced them to become industrialised, and made them dependent upon raw materials imported from abroad to supply their machinery. But the social organisation of the world has not kept pace with this internationalisation of production. Every country now has great industrial concerns producing not for local consumption or consumption within its own frontiers, but producing for markets all over the world, so they are all seeking for areas of raw material and they are all interested in guarding trade routes and in maintaining strategic points, such as Gibraltar, Malta and the Suez Canal. The fact that the capitalist must sell his product before he can reap his profit and must sell in a market which is constantly becoming too small for the productive power of the great capitalist industries of the world is the ultimate cause of war between countries in the capitalist world.

Mrs. Wootton said that there were wars before capitalism existed. That is true, but there were also class conflicts and economic rivalries before capitalism existed. They were not of a capitalist order, but they were just as

capable of causing war. Capitalism nowadays, in the twentieth century, is the cause of the wars that occur in the twentieth century, and we shall never get rid of war until we have got rid of capitalism and replaced it by Socialism, in which there will not be these class divisions and this search for private profit.

Mrs. Wootton claimed for Federal Union that it would succeed in obliterating national sentiment within the area of the Federal Union. But what is that area? Mrs. Wootton went on to say that Federal Union would not in the first place be as wide as the confines of the planet. You will notice a confusion of argument. The arguments put forward by the supporters of Federal Union are all based on what they assume would happen if Federal Union were world-wide, but they agree that it is not going to be world-wide. It has been pointed out by the Chairman of Federal Union, Mr. Kimber, that a world-wide Federal Union is not a practicable proposition, and he says this in an article in *Peace* for December, 1939: "To demand that it shall be world-wide at once is to insist on the impossible." Another supporter of Federal Union, Sir William Beveridge, says that world Federation is "not for the present time but for the millennium." So that what you have got to deal with is not some hoped-for Federal Union which is world-wide, but the Federal Union which will actually come into being if the activities of the Federal Union supporters are successful, and which will be confined to some much smaller area. In other words, it will be a Federal Union based on capitalism and facing other groups of capitalist forces, and it will be under the same drive and urge towards war. True, the area of the capitalist State will be extended. Instead of there being separate countries, England, France and a few other European countries will be merged together, but you must remember this, that nearly all the supporters of Federal Union want to exclude the non-democratic countries and, if the dictatorship countries are excluded, the population of this European Federation will be roughly equal to that of the United States of America. America is a Federal Union and has been for 150 years, but it has been forced into wars. America was in quite a number of wars

in the nineteenth century. It was in the Great War of 1914 and will probably be in the present war, and everything is drifting towards a war between the Federal Union of the United States and Japan. Both of them are now engaged in the competitive building of battleships for war in the Pacific at some time or other. Therefore, we are not dealing with a world-wide Federal Union but with a limited one, which will find itself face to face with other capitalist unions in the rest of the world. Sir William Beveridge, who said that world-wide Federal Union was for the millennium and that the area at the moment was to be a much more restricted one, also said this, which may, of course, be only his personal view as a prominent member of Federal Union, that the failure of the League of Nations has left a sort of vacuum in people's minds, and if we fill it with Federal Union it may help the Allies to win their war against Germany, since the German population will have the feeling that it is not worth while waging war against Federal Union. Therefore, in Sir William Beveridge's mind Federal Union has become at the present time a means of winning this war. He went on to say this: "In view of the failure of the peace settlement of 1919 and of the despondency created by it in many minds, there is a need of some new idea for the next peace—some different plan." There is a vacuum, but as a Socialist I object very strongly to filling that vacuum with Federal Union. The workers are despondent about the failure of these various things put before them. I want (and Mrs. Wootton, I think, should say that she wants) to fill the vacuum in the minds of the workers, not with Federal Union, but with Socialism.

I wish to touch further on the question as to whether Federal Union will prevent war. It is agreed that Federal Union will not in the first place be world-wide but will be confined to a limited area, so that there will be still sovereign States in the world. There will be the sovereign State of this European Federal Union and of the other capitalist areas in all parts of the world, and I claim that this search for profits, this capitalist conflict, will drive them towards war. I want to draw your attention to a pamphlet

called *The Federal Idea*, by Mr. Brailsford, in which he says (p. 11): "Certainly the Federation must have a monopoly of air power, sea power and all offensive arms. It should control such strategic positions as Gibraltar, the Turkish Straits, the Suez Canal and the entry to the Baltic." If there are any supporters of Federal Union present who think that Federal Union will prevent war, I can offer them, to start with, about half a dozen possible wars—a war with Spain and Italy about Gibraltar (Spain and Italy will be kept out of the Federal Union because they are not democratic countries), a war with Russia over the control of the Dardanelles, a war with Egypt and some other country, perhaps some rising nationalist country in Africa, about the control of the Suez Canal, and a war with some country or other about the entrance to the Baltic. Those are external wars. I should also like to point out that Mr. Brailsford claims that "the Federation must reserve the right to suspend or expel a Member-State for any grave or repeated offence against its Constitution." If the Federation tries to throw out some Member-State it will probably find itself involved in war with that State, just as the Northern States of America found themselves involved in war with the Southern States of the American Federal Union, although in that case it was a question not of throwing out a group but a group wanting to secede. Another man listed as a prominent supporter of Federal Union is Dr. Temple, Archbishop of York, and he claims that "to secede from the Federation would be an act of war against the Union." Therefore, given the continued existence of capitalism, the Federal Union is likely to find itself with a number of civil as well as external wars on its hands, and we come again to the original point, that in the view of the Socialist it is capitalism which sets up the sovereign State and arms it and drives it to war. By extending the area, we may avoid certain minor wars, in the same way as the League of Nations did, but at the best all I can see is that we shall have "fewer but larger wars" if we extend the area which the capitalist sovereign State, whether a Federal Union or not, happens to dominate.

The Federal Union is wrong historically in claiming

that we cannot have unity without sovereignty. That is stated in all its literature. The true position is that, if Governments or other organisations have mutual interests and a common outlook, there can be unity without sovereignty and, conversely, even if there is a Federal Union and a central Government with power over all the area within it, if there are conflicts of interest and outlook the mere existence of an international machine, even with a strong armed force, will not prevent parts of the area from quarrelling with each other and going to war. You may say, as the Federal Union does, that they would not have the armed forces to enable them to do that, but they will find them. There can be a civil war which verges on an international war. Such a war occurred in the United States of America. They had Federal Union in 1861, but they engaged in a civil war in which 600,000 men were killed or died of wounds or disease. That is a greater number than were lost by France in the whole twenty-two years of the Napoleonic Wars, it is about four times as many as were lost by France, Great Britain, Piedmont and Turkey in the Crimean War, it is about four times as many as were lost in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, and it is about one hundred times as many as were lost in the Boer War. It is an illusion to think that the existence of a sovereign State extending over a certain area gives freedom from the clash of capitalist interests within that area.

*(End of the first speech for the S.P.G.B.)*

THE CHAIRMAN said it seemed to him that the issue between Mrs. Wootton and Mr. Hardy was as to whether capitalism or sovereignty was the main cause of war, and he hoped that in the second round of the debate further enlightenment would be obtained on that point.

He would like to ask Mrs. Wootton whether the Federal system in other parts of the world, such as the United States, Canada and Australia, had been for the benefit of Socialism or against it, and he would like to ask Mr. Hardy whether, if there had been 48 capitalist sovereign States in America, he thought there would have

been more or less war than there had been. At the end of the present war the practical problem of the re-organisation of Europe would have to be faced. Was it better to have a Federation or to have no organisation at all?

## SECOND SPEECH FOR FEDERAL UNION.

MRS. BARBARA WOOTTON: I am in somewhat of a difficulty now. Mr. Hardy has quoted Lord Lothian. Fortunately, Lord Lothian has been appointed Ambassador to the United States, so he cannot make any more political statements. Then Mr. Hardy also quoted Sir William Beveridge and Mr. Brailsford, and there are many other people whom I was afraid he would quote and who said much less orthodox things than those he has mentioned, but he was very gallant and chivalrous and did not do so. Now, here is my difficulty. I cannot find any heretics in the Socialist Party of Great Britain to quote against Mr. Hardy. Apparently more uniform views are expressed by the members of that party than by the members of Federal Union. I do not know whether that is altogether an advantage. There are, of course, other parties that call themselves Socialist that could beat Federal Union in the matter of searching out heretics, but I think perhaps we had better not pursue that.

The supporters of Federal Union hold varied views on capitalism, pacifism, national defence, and the present war, just as, if I may revert to my original comparison, the people who ride in a railway train have varied views on capitalism, Socialism, and the causes and policies proper to the present war. But, when the train comes to a stop between stations, they are united in a common determination that the train shall be got going by hook or by crook, because they want to reach their destination, in order to get on with the war or to stop the war or to defend the exploited or to overthrow the exploiters or to grind the faces of the poor more effectively. Just while they are in the train with

the broken-down engine they are united in trying to get the one thing that is essential to them. In my judgment, Federal Union happens to be just the one thing that is essential to us now—nothing grand, nothing full of romance or idealism, but a very practical piece of machinery, like a railway engine, for taking us to the place we all want to reach, in order that, when we get there, we may deal with all these various questions.

Mr. Hardy told you a great deal about the Socialist Party of Great Britain. He told you that they have retained their internationalism, while a great many other so-called Socialist parties have abandoned it. That is true. He also told you that his party made Socialism their only "ism," and that, judged by their standards, there were not and there never had been (I held my breath, wondering whether he was going to add, "and there never will be," but he did not) any Socialist countries in the world. To my astonishment, a great part of the audience greeted that statement with loud applause. The supreme achievement of the Socialist Party of Great Britain (not of the European Federation), which is greeted with applause, is that there are not, and never have been, any Socialist countries in the world! I think that there is something wrong there. It seems to me a very odd statement to applaud, unless it was applauded by those who do not want to see any Socialist countries in the world, which I do not think is possible in this audience.

Mr. Hardy went on to tell you that the Socialist Party of Great Britain did not aim at power, and I did not think that that statement was very surprising. After all, one must have some kind of sense of proportion, and a party which is apparently further away from its objective than it was in 1904 has hardly cause to congratulate itself that it has not aimed at power.

I do not want to say things that are sarcastic about the Socialist Party of Great Britain, because in all sincerity (and I hope Mr. Hardy will accept this, as a very genuine statement), I do admire enormously their steadfast adherence to internationalism. I think it is their greatest single tenet.

and I do admire the way in which they have stood by it when others have abandoned it. But I am appalled at their lack of success, and at their apparent complacency at the absence of Socialist countries in the world. It is just on that account that I ask myself whether they have not omitted something which they ought to have included so that they might get *some* Socialist countries in the world, so that they might even aim at power, and so that they might no longer have to applaud the statement that they have failed in their primary objective.

That brings me to what I think was the main point in Mr. Hardy's address, and what I think is really the substance of our differences. He very gallantly said at the beginning that, if the Socialist Party of Great Britain could be convinced that Federal Union would stop war, its members would give up concentrating on Socialism and would transfer their energies to supporting Federal Union. Now, Mr. Hardy gave me there a great deal more than I would ever have asked for. I hope he will be convinced that Federal Union is a very important measure to prevent war, and I hope you will all be convinced of that, but I also hope that, if you are, you will *not* do what Mr. Hardy said you would do. I do most sincerely hope that you will not give up your concentration on Socialism, leaving the Socialist Party and coming into Federal Union, because if you do you will be doing half a job instead of a whole one. The whole burden of my case is this. The Socialist wants Socialism, international Socialism, and in order to get it he must get political Federation. If he goes and works for political Federation and lets his Socialism go hang, then let him take what is coming to him. If he concentrates on Socialism, and ignores political Federation, let him take the national Socialism that is coming to him. What the Socialist wants in order to make his full programme, and to leave no vacuum, is Socialism *and* political Federation. To make the background, to make the framework within which he can work, he needs political Federation, and unless he has that he is going to fail; he will be knocked back every twenty years, and perhaps more frequently, by a major international war, and he will see his fellow-workers in

other countries give way to the appeal of national sentiment, as something stronger than their unity as common human beings and common working people. Mr. Hardy took the view, as I understood him, that national sentiment is a quite unimportant thing, that it is not a real cause of war except amongst the capitalist classes; so I was astonished when he said he had been to international conferences where he found himself quite relieved that the delegates could not speak the same language, because of the appalling differences which separated them! As they could not speak the same language they were not able to get together and have a first-class row; by the time their remarks had been interpreted, I suppose, things had got a little eased off. Why were there these tremendous national differences? I cannot think that Mr. Hardy went to capitalist international conferences, where he might have expected to find such differences. I think he must have gone to Socialist international conferences, and when he got there he was appalled by the profundity and sharpness of national distinctions, so he went home to the Socialist Party of Great Britain and said: "We will work for Socialism first."

What are the causes of war? That is the most serious question that faces anybody living at this time. Mr. Hardy admits that war is very ancient, but he says it has always been due to class conflict—not always capitalist class conflict, but some kind of class conflict. It would take a very long time to look at all the wars in history, but that does seem to me to be a quite fantastic reading of history. The wars of Carthage against Rome, of Athens against Sparta, of Persia against Greece, of the American Colonists against the British mother country—it is extraordinarily difficult to explain all those wars, century after century, in terms of an internal class conflict within the warring States. There are, surely, plenty of causes of war; sometimes they are economic and sometimes they have to do, I think, with things that are even more fundamental in human nature than economics; I think they have to do with the very fundamental desire to get out and hit something. I mean that quite seriously. I do not think we shall get very far until we emancipate ourselves from that slavery to economic ideas

which was part of Victorian materialism, until we see that there are some fundamental psychological things which have played a very big part in history, just as economics have. There are economic causes of war and there are psychological causes of war, and there are bellicose people, like Mr. Hardy and me, longing to go for one another, because they want one another's money or because they just are that kind of person. Something has to be done to restrain them, and it astonishes me when people, living in a real world at a real time, say that machinery has nothing to do with stopping conflict. Is it conceivable that anybody who looks at actual conflicts, conflicts within one community or international conflicts, can really think that machinery to stop conflict makes no impression on conflict at all? I do not think even Mr. Hardy believes that, and I think he let the cat right out of the bag, so that it leaped right across to the gallery, when he said that what was wrong was that social organisation in our time had not kept pace with technical development. Thank you very much, Mr. Hardy; that is the best argument that I know for Federal Union. Social and political organisation have not kept pace with technical development, with the invention of the aeroplane, with the unity of the new world. Political boundaries have stayed put, and the political units of the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have remained as they were, while the world has gone far ahead of them. Every good Marxist knows that political and social organisation is the reflection of the technical conditions of his time, and the technical conditions of our time are conditions which demand, and imperatively demand, larger political units. That is really the whole burden of my case. Machinery does do something. It does not make us all loving little angels. It does not eliminate the economic causes of war; you have to have Socialism for that. But it does help to prevent the causes of war that exist from breaking out into actual war.

With regard to the United States of America, which were quoted by Mr. Hardy, the Chairman put a very awkward question to me. He asked me whether I thought that the United States of America or Canada, both of

which have Federal systems, were for Socialism or against it. I should give a very guarded answer, because I think that Federal Union is a very important but a limited thing. What I should say is this, that I think that, so far as the Federal system in those States has prevented internal war, it has made the path of the Socialists within them a great deal easier, because in the United States of America once, and in Canada not at all, have they had to see all their Socialist efforts destroyed in a single night because they had to set to work to fight one another. It is true that the United States of America had a civil war, and it was true that the United States of America engaged in international war, but I ask you to look at the history of Europe in the nineteenth century and at the history of the United States, and to compare the damage and the misery that have been caused by international war and the very much more limited story of civil war. I ask you, when you have done that, whether you do not think it is worth doing a great deal to make all war civil war rather than international. Civil war can be very terrible and very bloody when it happens, but it is very much more rare, because every child is brought up to think that international war is something that is honourable: every child is brought up to think, even if he afterwards rejects the idea, that when he is a grown man he may be called upon to fight for his country, and that, if he does fight for his country, he will be doing something of which he has cause to be proud. It is all very well to laugh, but you know perfectly well that there is a vast tradition behind that, and it is that that makes international war easy. Those who have not come to laugh at that—and there are millions—find international war easy and terrible, honourable and hateful, and they undertake it. But nobody is brought up to think that civil war is right and honourable, and that means that the odds against civil war are enormously greater than the odds against international war. It can happen, but it is rare.

Mr. Hardy said that we had one very terrible civil war on the American continent in the nineteenth century. That is true, but we had far more international war on the European continent. I make no apologies for the American

civil war, but I do say this, that since civil war is rare, a Federation which eliminates international war within its own boundaries has a very good chance of saving, at the very least, one war. If Mr. Hardy thinks, as I gather he does, that 600,000 lives are worth saving, he will agree that a Federation which saved only one war, would be a thing that would be worth while working for with all the energy that we have. Just one war between England and Germany, just one war between England and France—I do not care what war it is—and you would not have come here for nothing to-night.

The difficulty is that Mr. Hardy brings up all sorts of possibilities and I cannot answer him. There is not a Federal Unionist in this room who can answer him. You see, we accept the risks. We know that a Federation might fight against some other country, so long as it is not world-wide, and we have no hope that it will be world-wide immediately. Well, you have that situation, anyhow, haven't you? We know there might be secessions. We know there are all kinds of possibilities. We do not say we are going to give you everything, and if we did we should be liars. We take a much more modest standpoint. Mr. Hardy says because we do not give you everything we had better get out. His party promise to give you everything, and they remain where they were. We are going to give you one little thing, and that one little thing is a very greatly diminished risk of war within the area of the Federation. Putting it at the minimum, that one little thing might save one war and one million of lives. How many times the membership of the Socialist Party of Great Britain is that? It is on the ground that Federal Union is a valuable, though a limited thing, that we support it.

*(This ended the second speech for Federal Union.)*

## SECOND SPEECH FOR THE S.P.G.B.

MR. E. HARDY: I will commence by answering the question put to me by the Chairman, as to whether I think there would have been more or less war in the United States had there been 48 separate States instead of the States being combined in a Federal Union. Like Mrs. Wootton, I must be very guarded in my answer. What I can say definitely is this, that America in a Federal Union has been engaged in about six external wars and in a civil war which resulted in the loss of 600,000 lives. There might possibly have been 48 little wars had the States not been combined in a Federal Union, and they might or might not have resulted in 600,000 deaths. I would say this, that had there been no Federal Union there would not have been a civil war about the right of seceding from the Federal Union.

I might add, as it is rather to the point on this question, that, as I said before, if there is a common outlook and a common aim, even if that aim is merely mutual self-defence against some other Power, there can be unity without sovereignty.

The supporters of Federal Union claim that it has been a success wherever it has been operated, and they name South Africa, where the Boers and the English combined in a State which is a Federal Union. One of the men particularly well able to watch that at work is General Smuts, and he, instead of having been convinced by it that Federal Union is a thing to be aimed at, takes precisely the opposite point of view. In a speech that he made in the Union House of Parliament in 1928, dealing with this subject, he pointed out that in the British Empire there is no sovereign State, no written constitution, no central Government with the written power or the armed force to be able to coerce all the Member-States in the British Empire, and he says that that is something superior to this idea of a common sovereignty. In other words, he maintains that if there is a common aim and a common outlook there can be unity without sovereignty.

There is a still better example of that in the Socialist Party of Great Britain and its companion parties in other

countries. The Socialist Party of Great Britain and its companion parties in America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, do not have to have a written constitution and a central authority able to coerce the member-parties. They have the same principles, the same basis, the same aim and the same outlook. And, of course, when we have Socialism, when there are sufficient Socialists to be able to make that a practicable proposition, they will not need to be coerced into agreeing with each other. They agree with each other now when they are small, and they will do so when they are large.

There is one correction that I want to make. Mrs. Wootton obviously misunderstood something that I said. I did not say, or intend to say that the Socialist Party of Great Britain did not aim at power. What I pointed out was that they had never adopted the pernicious doctrine of wanting power for its own sake—power to throw out one ruling class and to put another in its place. We want power, but only for the purpose of introducing Socialism.

We do not deny that national sentiment exists, but we say that it does not cause war. To give an illustration, if national sentiment, national differences and national friction were the cause of war, we should probably find the English at war with the Welsh, instead of the English and Welsh being at war with the Germans. National sentiment exists, like national tradition, although national tradition is largely fictitious, being based on falsified history. National sentiment is something which is deliberately provoked and exploited by the States of the world.

With regard to the remark I made about a so-called international conference, it was not an international conference of Socialists, but an international conference of people brought together in various ways because they thought, like the Federal Unionists, that if there is a machinery of international organisation one can by that machinery create unity. That is wrong. Unity does not exist because the machinery exists. The machinery cannot make unity exist. Unity is something arising out of a common aim and a common pur-

pose, and when they exist there is no need to worry about machinery to make them effective.

I said that there never had been and were not now any Socialist countries, and there was some applause. Mrs. Wootton said she was surprised at the applause. The people who applauded did not mean by their applause that they were pleased that there never had been any Socialist countries, but they recognised the truth of this, that it is lamentable that so much time has been wasted by people who had a wrong idea about Socialism and who thought that, by having capitalism administered by people who called themselves Socialists, some progress would be made towards Socialism.

It is true that this party has had little success. The main hindrance to Socialism is the entrenched position of the capitalist class, with their wealth, their control of the political machinery and their power over propaganda, but an additional cause of the lack of progress of Socialism is the lack of comprehension on the part of various other people, who have not understood that there is only one way to get Socialism. The whole field for Socialist propaganda has been confused by people who have said, and got others to believe, that the administration of capitalism by Labour people or by people calling themselves Socialists or Communists is Socialism. That confusion has made Socialist propaganda doubly difficult.

Mrs. Wootton accepted my quotations from Lord Lothian and Sir William Beveridge but rather explained them away by implying that the authors of those quotations were heretics. I would point out, however, that they have not been repudiated by Federal Union, and their names are given on Federal Union leaflets as "prominent supporters" of Federal Union. They cannot be repudiated by Federal Union, because Federal Union disclaims responsibility for what it calls the details of Federal Union. It says in effect: "As long as you are agreed with the principle, you can have what form you like; these things are for your own judgment." Federal Union wants to have the advantage of that irresponsibility, and, having got the

advantage of that irresponsibility and having attracted a certain membership by saying, "You are free within certain limits to say what you like," it cannot at the same time claim the advantage of repudiating those people when they take advantage of the right given to them by Federal Union.

With regard to the illustration of people travelling in a train and all wanting to reach a certain destination, that may sound all very well, but I should like to point out that this is not the first time we have had this illustration put before us. Twenty years ago many of the people whose names are listed as prominent supporters of Federal Union had another immediate object for which we were to suspend all our Socialist activities. They wanted us then to support the League of Nations. They said: "Put aside Socialism and support the League of Nations, in order to prevent another war." The people who listened to them have wasted twenty years on League of Nations propaganda and they have not prevented another war. We Socialists do not want to see another twenty years wasted on Federal Union propaganda.

Mrs. Wootton referred to the question of appearing on the same platform with the wrong people and said it was a weak argument. I want to remind you that Federal Union has views not only on war and the prevention of war, but also on Socialism, and those views are anti-Socialist views. It claims in principle that it is neutral on the question, that it takes no sides in the controversy between Socialism and capitalism. I would say it is not neutrality, but what Mussolini calls "temporary non-belligerency." I would quote from Lord Lothian's pamphlet, *The Ending of Armageddon* (pp. 6 and 7): "Unemployment and poverty are the inevitable results (of sovereignty). This is equally true whether nations maintain an individualist or a Socialist economy. We are not concerned, as Federal Unionists, to take sides in this controversy." Mr. Streit makes a similar claim. He says that "Federal Union will end the insecurity and economic warfare now ravaging the whole world." Lord Lothian also gives an illustration of what he claims that Federal Union has done. In addressing an

American audience last October, he said that the nineteenth century was an era of marvellous prosperity in England, which came to an end in 1914, and he said the reason why it came to an end was that Europe did not adopt Federal Union as America had done. Now, if Federal Unionists believe that sovereignty is the cause of poverty, unemployment and insecurity, what are Socialists doing in the ranks of people like that and an organisation like that? It is fundamental to the Socialist case that capitalism is the cause of poverty, unemployment and insecurity, and that those things cannot be abolished unless capitalism is abolished. If Socialists join an organisation which says: "We are neutral on this matter; sovereignty is the cause of war and of all these evils," they will make Socialist propaganda infinitely more difficult than it would otherwise be. For a Socialist to be in an organisation like that, which repudiates the very basis of Socialist propaganda, is detrimental to Socialist propaganda.

There is one curious thing that I should like to mention. When Lord Lothian claimed that capitalism had been a great success in England in the last century, which covered the hungry forties and the depression in the eighties, and so forth, he went on to say, speaking to his American audience, that that era of prosperity came to an end because Europe did not adopt Federal Union, implying that if Federal Union is adopted there will be prosperity. But I notice a discrepancy. That kind of propaganda is quite useful in England provided that the audience accepts the view that America is prosperous, but in an American publication of the Federal Union I find they do not say, "You have Federal Union and you have prosperity in America." They say, if you did adopt Federal Union including America and other countries, "good times would come back to America."

Mrs. Woolton claims that Federal Union is in line with the needs of the modern world. In my opening speech I said it was not, and I want to develop that point of view. A man whose name is constantly appearing in connection with Federal Union is Alexander Hamilton, who is described as the father of the American Federal Union

Constitution, and I claim that Federal Union ideas are not of the twentieth century, but back in the eighteenth century, along with Alexander Hamilton, who died in 1804. Senator Borah, who died in January of this year, was a lifelong admirer of Alexander Hamilton, and in an obituary notice about Senator Borah, published in *The Times* (January 22nd, 1940) I find the following : "The America which he wanted to see was the America which was in the hearts of the Fathers of the Constitution—a country of free citizens each owning his own farm or his own business, independent both economically and politically, able and ready to stand up for his own rights and his own interests against any pressure from others." Then *The Times* goes on to say : "It is, however, an ideal which during the last quarter of a century has been rapidly losing any correspondence with reality. Even before the last War there had been great amalgamations in the oil, steel, packing, and railway industries, and the movement has developed in a remarkable fashion within the last twenty years. The independent citizen owning and running his own business has been to a very large extent eliminated in favour of vast organisations, the ultimate control of which, through an intricate network of holding companies and subsidiaries, is vested in small financial groups in New York."

I want to point this out, that Alexander Hamilton, who originated the Federal Union Constitution, had in his mind the late eighteenth century world of small producers and farmers, and that world no longer exists, though Federal Union believes that it exists. If you read Federal Union literature on the State you will find it gives the reason for the existence of the State in the following terms : "The State exists to promote the happiness of the individuals who make up the nation." The supporters of Federal Union see an organisation promoting the happiness of those individuals, but I say that that is an optical illusion. They peep behind the State and think they see individuals whose happiness is being promoted by the State, but what they really see are economic classes with conflicting interests, great companies and combines, representing massed wealth and massed power. That is what exists behind the State, and when

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you have got Federal Union you will not have a sovereign State at the centre supported by masses of individuals, but you will have what exists in America, a country in which it is claimed by Mr. Harold Ickes, the Secretary of the Interior, that some 60 families, "through 200 corporations, control half of America's business and the people of the United States of America." When you have got your Federal Union you will not have got a union of individuals but a union of great corporations and combines, such as J. P. Morgans, which, by directorships, controls corporations with total assets of some 20,000,000,000 dollars. That is the world you live in, and not the world that Alexander Hamilton saw in the late eighteenth century and which the supporters of Federal Union believe still exists at the present time.

Federal Union claims that it will safeguard democracy, but at the same time it is not committed to getting rid of capitalism. It recognises the importance of maintaining democracy and proposes to exclude undemocratic countries, but it has overlooked this fact, that democracy is never really safe while capitalism exists. It has been widely admitted by students of the rise of Nazism that the great depression of 1929 to 1930 played a great part in sending Hitler to power, just as it played a great part in this country in putting the National Government into power. What is Federal Union going to do when the next great economic crisis comes? How it is going to prevent it provoking again the rise of anti-democratic movements? I read in the report of a recent address by the Secretary of the American Federation of Labour, that President Roosevelt, with his New Deal, promised prosperity and security in America—things which were embodied in the Federal Union Constitution that Alexander Hamilton helped to promote—and he goes on to say: "Instead, we find labour torn into warring camps, industry depressed, capital 'on strike'; we find ten million unemployed, youth discontented and age disengaged." (*Evening Standard*, February 5th, 1940.)

We, as Socialists, say that wherever there is capitalism there will be permanent poverty and periodical depressions. In America there is always this condition—large numbers

of unemployed, "youth discontented and age discouraged." In other words, there is always a fruitful breeding-ground for movements like Hitler's and Mussolini's which will seek to overthrow your democratic institutions and send you on the road to dictatorships.

Federal Union cannot prevent war. Nor can it even safeguard democracy, as it claims to be able to do, by keeping undemocratic countries outside, while it keeps inside the capitalism that causes poverty and war and discontent, and leads to dictatorships.

(*End of the second speech for the S.P.G.B.*)

### FINAL SPEECH FOR FEDERAL UNION.

MRS. BARBARA WOOTTON: There is very much that I agree with in what Mr. Hardy has said, but I think there are one or two points that we have to get straight, even in the last round.

First of all, I must put right the matter of the heretics. I do not suppose any of these gentlemen who have been quoted are heretics from the Federal Union point of view. I think they probably all take the view of Federal Union that I take, namely, that it is a necessary tool with which to make a number of other things. I hope that when we get Federation those of them who are not Socialists will be very much in the minority; I have done my best to make them so, and I hope that many other Socialists will come into Federal Union for the same purpose. Some people say that Federal Union is a necessary step to make the world safe for capitalism and some say it is a necessary step to make the world safe for Socialism. Suspicious capitalists say it is to make the world safe for Socialism, and suspicious Socialists say it is to make the world safe for capitalism. I myself have a very strong suspicion that it is neither of those things, but a device to make a part of the world *safe*. After that you can go on to decide

whether it is going to be a Socialist world or a capitalist world, and then we can get to grips with these gentlemen who do not agree with us about that.

Let us also get right this point about prosperity. All the last part of Mr. Hardy's peroration I should very much like to have said myself, because I agree with it all. I agree with all he said about poverty, unemployment, trade depressions and mismanagement, and the present misery, waste, and exploitation of the poor. I would go so far as to say a very great part of what Mr. Hardy said about the business of the State being to keep down those who were down and to keep up those who were up. We shall not get rid of those things, in my view and in Mr. Hardy's view, until we get something which we should both call the Socialist order, but we shall not begin to get the Socialist order until we get a breathing space, and we shall not get a breathing space until we get some kind of international political security. We must have a breathing space to enable us to attack these appalling economic evils, which are themselves exaggerated by the existence of political insecurity. The ridiculous economic policy that separate States pursue this fantastic business of growing things in places where it is very uneconomic to grow them, of keeping comrades and friends and neighbours out of your State so as to protect yourself against the menace of their competition—that is all part of international anarchy and it is all making your economic problems worse. Political insecurity makes your economic problems worse, and you never get a chance to tackle them, because every so often you have to put down all your Socialist tools, and take off your Socialist overalls, and put on your uniform and go out to fight your comrades. Then, when it is all over, you go back and start your international Socialist propaganda all over again, about half a century further back than you were before.

Mr. Hardy pointed out that of recent years the English and the Welsh have not engaged in war with one another, and he says that shows that nationalism is not the force that some people think it is. I think that

illustration might very well be taken to show something else. The Welsh are very Welsh and very full of Welsh nationalism, and the English are very English and so full of English nationalism that they forget to notice that anyone else is not English. But, in point of fact, they do not now engage in war with one another, and I submit that one of the reasons is that they have grown accustomed to a common citizenship and living under a common political unit. I want to see the French and English and Germans (and everybody else I can get, but let us have them for a start if we cannot get anybody else) with the same appreciation of differences of national culture that is shown by the English and the Welsh, and the same absence of military aggressiveness.

Mr. Hardy said that some people who support Federal Union supported the League of Nations, and had not done much good with that. That may be true. I am not one of those people, because I never supported collective security, as I think it is a wrong principle. But if some people are to be judged by the standard of success they attain then I think we should all be judged by it, and I do not think any of us—neither the Socialist Party of Great Britain nor the League of Nations—have been very successful in preventing war. We have not been able to prevent the present war.

I now come to something that surprised me very much. Mr. Hardy opened his second round by pointing out that if we have a common outlook we do not need all this paraphernalia of Federal Union and machinery and written constitutions. I am quite prepared to agree with him up to a point, but I very nearly fell down flat in a faint when I heard the example which he quoted. In the British Empire, he said, we do not need all this machinery, because we have a common outlook in Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand; we British understand one another and we do not need machinery; we do not go to war with one another. In fact, we even have Socialist Parties of Great Britain paralleled in the British Dominions, but not, I think, in other countries. What has happened to the argument about the economic

causes of war? The competition between the capitalists of Great Britain and Canada is a very fierce competition, and the same is true of the competition between the capitalists of Great Britain and Australia, but, because they have a common outlook (just what I was saying), away go all the economic causes of war, and they all live happily ever after! I do not think the argument that the causes of war are strictly economic will stand up against the illustration that Mr. Hardy himself has given us. It astonished me to hear the British Empire quoted as an argument by the Socialist Party of Great Britain. There we see that a common outlook is of great importance, but do not you know cases in which you are sure there is a common outlook and you cannot get to it? You cannot get to the man who wants to extend his hand; you cannot get to him, although you know he thinks as you do and you know he has no more stomach for this game than you have. What do you have to do to get to him at present? You wait until he comes over in an aeroplane, and when he does that you do your best to kill him. You shoot at him when he is twenty thousand feet up, and you go on shooting at him when he is ten thousand feet up, and even when he is only a foot off the ground. Then he crashes and touches the ground, and you come down to him and you get out of your aeroplane, rush up to his plane, help him out and give him a cigarette and say: "It is a bad business, but here we are; we will do the best we can for you; we know that you feel as we do about it." You know he has a common outlook with you, you know he is your comrade, but you cannot get to him. You know you have common sentiments and impulses with those people against whom you are now fighting, but you cannot get to them, because you have not provided the simple and necessary machine by which you can do it, you have not provided the machinery by which force can be exercised not against groups but against aggressive individuals. Your anger against Hitler can never reach its object, and you are condemned to engage in war against millions of people who have only one thing in common, that is, that they are not Hitler. That is why machinery is

important. Machinery provides a means whereby, through a common citizenship, the common sentiments that are now frustrated can find an outlet. Then you can get on with your work of making a Socialist society. It is a question which you are going to get first, Socialism or internationalism. Mr. Hardy says Socialism, but I say that is not how it is going to be; it is going to be internationalism or death.

(*End of the final speech for Federal Union.*)

### FINAL SPEECH FOR THE S.P.G.B.

MR. E. HARDY: Mrs. Wootton has again made the point that Federal Union is not a Socialist organisation. It is, in her view, a necessary tool for Socialists, and she used the illustration that it would provide a breathing space in which Socialists can get on with their work. The Socialist Party of Great Britain has been in existence, as I said, since 1904, and in every year since 1904 and almost every day on our platforms and elsewhere we have had people telling us that if only we would give up our propaganda for some other most important thing at the moment it would help us and smooth the way to Socialism, and give us opportunities and breathing spaces. We know from experience that all those things have been illusory. They have taken effort away from Socialism and confused the minds of workers who might otherwise have been interested in Socialism, and they have been of no use to us as Socialists at all. But there is another even greater illusion behind this idea of a breathing space. At the back of it there is this notion that if we do something or other with capitalism we can steady the boat and prevent it from rocking. But while we have capitalism, that is to say, while we have rival classes within the State opposing each other and capitalist groups coming constantly into conflict with each other about their markets, their raw materials, their strategic points, we cannot have stability or calm the

storm in order to get on with something else. Always new crises will occur and new sources of conflict will appear, and if it is not between individual countries, as now, it will be between Federal Union groups.

Mrs. Wootton says that with Federal Union we may have wars, but that things will not be any worse then than without Federal Union. There are two things to be said to that. Even if we should have wars without Federal Union I do not want to waste, and see other Socialists waste, twenty years on supporting Federal Union, as they wasted twenty years on supporting the League of Nations, only to find, in the end, of course, that they have not advanced Socialism at all, but have, in fact, taken energy away from Socialist propaganda that might otherwise have been devoted to it. Seeing the world as it really is, we know that we shall have wars, whether the world is divided up into the existing nations and groups of nations or whether there is Federal Union in Europe as there is in America and the U.S.S.R. We shall have these groups brought into conflict with each other, because the capitalist basis will remain.

I quoted Mr. Brailsford's words about the Federal Union controlling the entrance to the Baltic, and Mrs. Wootton said that many supporters of Federal Union have written things for which she would not like to accept responsibility, but it does not matter whether that is a view held only by Mr. Brailsford and some other group inside Federal Union or not; it is the logic of the case. A Federal Union of Europe must have boundaries and it must have an armed force. It will be faced with the usual necessity of capitalist States. Capitalism makes them come into conflict with each other. When Hitler said of Germany, "We must expand or explode," he was laying down the law for capitalism. Therefore, the Federal Union of Europe must try to control the Suez Canal, the Dardanelles, Gibraltar, the entrance to the Baltic, and anything else that will enable it to maintain its own position and prevent other capitalist States from encroaching on its position.

Mrs. Wootton referred to all organisations being judged from the point of view of their success, and mentioned that

the Socialist Party of Great Britain, a small organisation, was not able to prevent the present war. But there is a difference between it and the supporters of the League of Nations. The Socialist Party of Great Britain was never under any illusion about the matter. It recognised from the beginning that while capitalism exists there will be this drive to war. We know that we shall not abolish war until we have abolished capitalism, and we cannot do that until we have got Socialists, so that, in our view, the prime purpose and the great function of a Socialist organisation is to preach Socialism and to make Socialists. That is where all these other organisations failed. Many supporters of Federal Union do not want to preach Socialism and do not want us to preach it. They are, therefore, not merely not helping Socialism, but hindering the work of making Socialists. Had their efforts been devoted to making Socialists, the Socialist movement would have been stronger than it is now and far better able to avoid war.

Mrs. Wootton seized on my reference to the British Empire, but I think she rather misunderstands the point. I am not holding up the British Empire as the model of economic organisation, but as an instance of the wrongness of the basic principle behind Federal Union, that there can be "No unity without sovereignty." One of the admirers of Alexander Hamilton, his biographer, Mr. F. S. Oliver, held the view of no unity without sovereignty, and pointed out in 1906 that the British Empire had no sovereignty, therefore, its unity was fictitious and it would collapse under strain. But it did not collapse under the strain of the war of 1914. I hold that the principle of Federal Union, that one cannot have unity without sovereignty, is wrong. There can be unity without sovereignty if there is a common purpose and a common outlook, even if the common purpose is merely defence against external Powers, that is, other States in the capitalist world. That has nothing to do with Socialism, but it does show the wrongness of the Federal Union principle that there can be no unity without sovereignty.

With regard to the companion parties of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, they are not confined to the

Dominions of the British Empire; there is one in the United States of America.

There are one or two further points that I want to make in conclusion. When one is looking at an organisation like Federal Union one is entitled not merely to ask what are its principles and its policy, but to look at the people in it and to ask what are their credentials and whether they inspire confidence. Mrs. Wootton will say, as she has said, that Federal Union does not claim to be Socialist and, therefore, its members are not confined to Socialists. I look down the list and I find Liberals and Tories, people who, like Lord Lothian, claim that capitalism has been an outstanding success and that sovereignty and not capitalism is the cause of poverty. Our answer to all those people, those Liberals and Tories, is that they have always been wrong on all of the major problems facing this country and other countries. We look at other Federal Union supporters, people who believe in the administration of capitalism by those who call themselves Labour and Socialist. We said that experiment would not be useful, and in the event we proved to be right. We were right about the war of 1914. Many of the present supporters of Federal Union claimed for the last war that it would make the world safe for democracy, but the S.P.G.B. said they were wrong. Those people supported the League of Nations, but we said: "Do not waste your time; the League of Nations will not prevent war; it will not make the world safe for democracy," and we were right. We said that if capitalism remained there would be other wars; they said there would not, but we were right. Can those people say: "We deserve your confidence, because we have always been right"? The utmost they can claim for themselves is this: "We are bound to be right this time, because we have been wrong so often before."

What is the Socialist alternative to Federal Union? I have pointed out to you that the supporters of Federal Union cannot offer you a world-wide Federal Union and, therefore, all their main arguments go by the board. It will be a limited Federal Union, which will be faced by the capitalist rivalries that exist at present. Socialists have one,

and only one, alternative. They say that capitalism causes poverty, unemployment and crises, and those three things taken together make it uncertain that democracy will ever be safe in a capitalist world. We say further that capitalist rivalries drive towards war, that until you get rid of capitalism you will not get rid of war or poverty, and that you will not get rid of capitalism until you make Socialists. Therefore, the only certain way to rid the world of war is to rid it of capitalism, and the only way to do that is to win over the majority of the population to Socialism. That is the work of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, and it cannot be the work of the Federal Union, as admitted by the Federal Union supporters. The whole tenor of Federal Union propaganda—such as the statements of Lord Lothian that capitalism has been a success and that sovereignty is the cause of war, unemployment, depressions and poverty—is anti-Socialist, and the only answer to it is the propaganda for Socialism carried on by the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

*(End of the final speech for the S.P.G.B.)*

THE CHAIRMAN, in proposing a very hearty vote of thanks to Mrs. Wootton and Mr. Hardy, said he hoped the members of the audience would bear in mind the good points and the bad points that had been made by both speakers and would not accept everything that had been said by either speaker without criticism and consideration.

The vote of thanks was accorded with acclamation, and the meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chairman, proposed by Mr. Hardy.

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